

Kaulani Ostrem, age 17, a senior at Kahuku High School, co-chaired an effort in her community to reduce the number of deaths and accidents on the roadways in her community.

I look forward to having the opportunity to meet Lauren and Celinda and to welcome them to Washington when they come to the Capitol in May. Lauren, Celina, Tessa, and Kaulani exemplify the very best of our youth, of Hawaii, and of our nation.

REFORMS NEEDED IN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, today I have organized my freshman Democratic colleagues to speak out on an issue of great importance to our country, that is, on the issue of health care. I understand that the gentleman from New York (Mr. ISRAEL) has already spoken, and I thank my colleague for his participation.

Mr. Speaker, many of us were elected in large part because we vowed to reform our health care system, to make quality medical care and prescription drugs affordable for all Americans.

Today nearly 44 million Americans under the age of 65, 11 million of whom are children, do not have health insurance.

In the State of Rhode Island, my home, 1 out of 10 people lack health insurance. As we all know, health insurance is critical to obtaining necessary, affordable care. Those without insurance often pay two, even three times more for medical care than an insured person pays for that very same service. The uninsured are hospitalized at least 50 percent more often than the insured for avoidable conditions. They are also more likely to be diagnosed with later-stage cancer than those with insurance. Even newborn infants born to uninsured mothers have a 31 percent greater risk for adverse health outcomes. This inequity in access to medical care reflects the unfair disparity and health care costs the uninsured face on a regular basis.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I plan to introduce legislation to require the Department of Health and Human Services to make substantive recommendations on how to eliminate this disparity and report to Congress within 1 year on these findings.

Another facet of today's health insurance quagmire is the high cost employees must pay for health insurance premiums, so high, in fact, that many opt out of this vital benefit. Over one-third of the uninsured are in families where employer-sponsored coverage is declined, and Medicaid does not always cover these families, which is why I plan to introduce legislation to help States subsidize employees and some of the employers' health insurance pre-

mium costs. I want to make sure employed workers are able to obtain the health care coverage that they need and deserve.

A third aspect of health insurance I am deeply concerned about is the lack of prescription drug coverage in Medicare; 13 million Medicare recipients lack drug coverage at the present time. In Rhode Island alone, almost 200,000 of our seniors have no drug coverage; and drugs are not cheap. In 1999, prescription drugs accounted for almost 10 percent of individual health spending. In many cases these prescriptions amount to \$500 or more per month. To a senior on a fixed income, this represents a greater share of their monthly check. A disproportionate share, and this is wrong.

With 77 million baby boomers soon to retire, we must curb this trend before it spirals out of control. By requiring drug companies to sell prescription drugs in the United States for the same price they charge in underdeveloped countries, I believe we can alleviate the burden on people lacking drug coverage. I commend the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN), who has introduced H.R. 1400, of which I am a proud cosponsor, the Prescription Drug Fairness Act for Seniors 2001. This legislation ensures drug companies charge fair prices in the U.S., and it is estimated to reduce prices for brand-name prescription medications on average by 40 percent.

□ 1400

All of these issues that I have mentioned address healthcare affordability, and ensuring and guaranteeing a minimum standard of quality is also important. After all, the health care we must pay for is essential for everyone, and it must provide the care that people need. The Bipartisan Patient Protection Act of 2001, otherwise known as the Patients' Bill of Rights, would ensure patients obtain this quality care and are granted greater control over their health care.

If enacted, this bill would provide access to emergency care, specialty care, and clinical trials and allow external review for all Americans who receive employer-sponsored health care. This bill represents a critical step toward improving our health care system and placing control of patient care firmly in the hands of patients and their doctors.

Disparity in health care costs, lack of affordable health insurance, a prescription drug plan for our seniors, and patients' rights to control the quality of their own medical care are some of the most pressing health care issues facing America today. I urge my colleagues to work together to solve these problems.

Reforming our health care system is probably one of the most complicated endeavors for Congress to undertake.

But let us not lose sight of it. It is a goal that we can and must achieve together. It must happen. I look forward to working with all of my colleagues to make this a reality.

TRIBUTE TO FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE OF MICHIGAN, RICHARD H. AUSTIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAYS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, Thursday, April 26, the funeral services will be held in Detroit for Richard H. Austin, who served six terms as Secretary of State of Michigan.

As the longest serving Secretary of State in Michigan's history, Dick Austin set the highest standard of service to the public. Whether it was highway safety or citizen participation in the electoral process, he was always ahead of his time.

It was my privilege to be a teammate with Dick Austin as I ran for Governor and he began his first quest for statewide office, breaking down barriers confronting candidates for elective office in Michigan. He became the longest-serving black elected State official in the history of Michigan, as he was Michigan's first black CPA and the first black candidate for mayor.

I had the joy many times of campaigning with him, hearing him in his quiet way spelling out his aspirations, and watching the magic worked by his warm smile and his friendly handshake. That smile is now gone, but the memories of it will always linger. His friendliness is now a legacy not to be forgotten.

Dick Austin never let down the public trust, and the citizens of Michigan responded time after time. He was an intrinsic part of the web of public service in Michigan for many decades. He made Michigan a better place, and he will be missed by many of us as a warm friend and by all of us as an invaluable public servant.

Mr. Speaker, we here today join together to mourn the passing of Richard H. Austin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF RICHARDSON PREYER, FORMER MEMBER OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. COBLE. This special order, Mr. Speaker, is to commemorate and honor the memory of one of our distinguished former Members, the Honorable Richardson Preyer.

Judge Preyer, Congressman Preyer, was my congressman for 12 years. His family, Mr. Speaker, and this is probably known to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) because he is a man of letters, and this probably will not surprise him, his family was one of the frontiers in the pharmaceutical industry. Vicks VapoRub, for example, was invented, if you will, and the laboratory was actually probably make-shift, probably a modest facility at the time, by his ancestors.

I shared this story with him one day. When I was a member of the Coast Guard in Seattle, Washington, one of my first times out of North Carolina as a young man, I came across a Vicks VapoRub package in a drugstore in Seattle. I saw on that package, Mr. Speaker, Greensboro, North Carolina. That is where it was manufactured. I felt a sense of obvious pride, as my friend in the well is smiling approvingly.

I saw him much years afterward, and I told him that story. He too beamed with pride because I could see in his face the pride of his grandparents perhaps or uncles that preceded him in the development of that drug that became, obviously, a household word.

Mr. Speaker, Richardson Preyer served as a State superior court judge. He served as a United States district judge on the Federal bench. He was a candidate in the Democratic gubernatorial primary for the office of governor. Although he did not win that nomination, he conducted a very credible campaign.

Then in 1968, Mr. Speaker, Richardson Preyer ran what was then an open seat. I guess it was Congressman Kornegay had retired. Richardson Preyer and Bill Osteen, a long-time friend of mine, who is now a United States district court judge himself in the middle district of North Carolina, Rich and Bill, Bill Osteen, paired off in a very spirited, well-conducted campaign. Mr. Preyer, Congressman Preyer was declared the winner; and he went on to serve six terms in the House of Representatives.

Emily and Rich, those names became synonymous with political spousal teamwork. I mean, oftentimes where there was one, there was the other. Or if Rich would be in one part of the district, Emily would be in the other part,

carrying the political message. They were very adept campaigners.

In fact, it has been said once that they felt perhaps Emily was, maybe, more comfortable on the hustings than was Rich. I do not know that that is true, but she did have that very natural gift of backslapping. There is nothing wrong with that, because I have been accused of being a backslapper myself. Rich was not a backslapper, but he nonetheless represented our district very ably.

Someone once asked me, Mr. Speaker, "You and Rich Preyer seem to get along very well, and your voting records are probably light years apart." They probably are. I think Rich Preyer's voting record and my voting record would be very dissimilar. But I said, "Just because one does not agree with another on various and sundry political issues, that does not mean that you cannot disagree agreeably."

Rich Preyer, I think epitomized that in his life. He was a very agreeable person although perhaps he did not agree oftentimes with others and with me in particular. But we never drew our sword from our sheaths because of that.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the Federal building, the old Federal courthouse and post office in downtown Greensboro bears the name the Preyer Building. That building, I say to the gentleman from Raleigh, North Carolina (Mr. PRICE), he will remember that that building housed congressional offices, by gosh, probably 30 years. I think Rich's office was there. I know Gene Johnston's was there. Robin Britt's was there. Ours was there.

We had to leave that building some recent months ago as a matter of constituency friendliness. Many of the people who came to call upon me were infirm and were not able to walk the two or three blocks that was necessary to gain admittance to the Preyer Building because there was virtually no on-street parking. So that was a constituency-friendly move, one that I did not want to make. That old building was home to me and to many constituents for that matter. But we did move.

But each time I go back in there, I have fond memories of visiting with staff personnel there. I see that sign, the Preyer Federal Building, and it brings back good memories.

I think that the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), Speaker pro tempore, is from the valley, the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. He probably did not know Mr. Preyer, but he would have liked him. He had many friends, some of whom still serve in this very body.

But I see two of my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, have joined me on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Charlotte, North Carolina (Mr. WATT).

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Greensboro, North Carolina (Mr. COBLE), from the adjoining district for yielding to me. Of course they say most of the districts in North Carolina adjoin mine in one way or another, so I have got a lot of adjoining Congress people. This is the first time I have heard the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) yield to me so much time as I may consume so I think that is a dangerous precedent. But I will try not to make him regret that.

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield very briefly?

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. I am happy to yield to the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) do not get me in the doghouse with the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE). Do not use too much time.

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am going to leave plenty of time.

I have been thinking about a way to personalize this. I never served with Representative Rich Preyer. I met him for the first time in 1992 when I was running for Congress for the first time. Rich and his wife Emily had heard about my candidacy. I, of course, had heard about Rich Preyer for years and years and years; and that was the beginning of a strong personal relationship that I started to develop with Rich Preyer and with Emily Preyer.

□ 1415

I was thinking on the way over here, though, when I was a little boy, my mother used to treat us when we got sick with a big dose of castor oil if we had a stomach virus, but if we were congested, and quite often we were because we lived in kind of an airy house, she would always whip out the Vicks VapoRub and rub it on our chest and heat a heating pad and the smell of Vicks VapoRub would come up. Over time it would release whatever congestion you had.

Now, you probably wonder, well, what in the world does that have to do with Rich Preyer? Rich Preyer's grandfather was the person who patented Vicks VapoRub. He turned it into quite a success story financially for his family. So Rich was really born into a family of privilege as a result of his parents' and foreparents' business dealings and as a result of this innovative patent that people in my age range probably knew as well as anything else for its medicinal impact.

Rich never really worked in that business, but in a sense Rich took over that releasing of congestion and took it to a broader public plane. Because when I first heard about Rich Preyer, he was out there on the cutting edge, paving the way, opening the way, so to